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popular type which has been published since Edersheim's is probably not an exaggeration, and a large usefulness can be predicted for it.

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In a recent volume, Professor W. B. Hill, of Vassar College, endeavors to give the student who takes up for the first time a study of Jesus' life the preliminary information necessary for an intelligent approach to the subject. To call the book an *Introduction to the Life of Christ*<sup>1</sup> is not quite exact. We might expect, in these days of historical interest, that one would feel the necessity of introducing himself to this subject by way of the history of the times in which Jesus' life was set, but of this there is no word in the present volume. Nor is there any essential place for it in the author's method, since he thinks "the Christ of history is best known through the Christ of personal experience."

What is presented is really an "Introduction" to the writings in which Jesus' name is mentioned. References to him in heathen and Jewish writings, items gleaned from the Apostolic Fathers, data from the apocryphal books and from the New Testament literature outside the Gospels are briefly catalogued. Chief attention is centered upon the four canonical gospels. Their collection into a canon, the manner of ascertaining their original text, the date of their composition, their literary relation to one another, their authors, their characteristics and trustworthiness as sources for the life of Christ are the principal topics discussed.

The writer seems to be quite as much interested in apologetics as in history. He would hardly allow the college student (for whom the book is prepared) to approach Jesus' personality from the standpoint and by the methods employed in the pursuit of other historical problems. He must take a very different attitude here. The Gospels are to be regarded as a unique product canonized by the "Spirit of God working in the churches." The stories about Jesus' miracles and his divine origin as related in the Gospels are never to be questioned. The author would have his readers understand at the beginning that the question of an early or a late date for the Gospels never would have arisen except out of an interest of skeptics to deny that miracles ever happen or to refuse to see anything divine in Jesus. Of those who think

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Life of Christ*. By W. B. HILL. New York: Scribner, 1911. Pp. x+226. \$1.25.

there are inconsistencies between the picture of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and in John, it is said: "Usually the most influential factor in shaping this opinion is the conclusion, reached in advance, that the main thesis of John—the divinity of Jesus—cannot be accepted." In speaking of modern critical attempts to reconstruct the life of Jesus, we are told that the biographer "usually follows pretty consistently his own prejudices for or against the miraculous and divine in deciding what to include and what to omit."

In short, modern critical study of Jesus' career is ruled out of court in favor of the apologetic and harmonistic method of former times. It is a serious question whether this method, particularly among the students in our colleges and universities, may not be attended by harmful results. It is at least certain that Jesus has proved much more attractive to many moderns when his historical personality has been divested of naïve and primitive ornamentation and he has been allowed to stand forth in his original simplicity and splendor.

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